

THE DANCE—By J. B. Connolly

INTO the middle of the dance somebody threw what was meant for a bombshell. "They say the cutter's on the way," suddenly said this lad. "Some say she's in the bay," he added, when his preliminary seemed to produce no consternation. But the man at whom it was aimed was not unacquainted with the abounding jealousy of the male in this most primitive region of west Newfoundland, and also it had ever been his secret pride that nothing affected his nerve.

"Even if she is," he retorted now, "what odds till she gets here?" and in doubling enjoyment continued to swing his buxom partner. But at midnight a young fellow in fishing rig came from the other side of the bay with news yet more positive and alarming. "Where's Capt. Powers?" "In a minute, boy, and I'll be with you," and to the assembled admiration finished the reel.

"She's to anchor below, and they've been inquiring of you, captain—you and the little Weasel."

"Then it's time for me to go. But what d'y' say, Bess, another dance?"

"Surely, Bryan, one more," and in exulting triumph with this capture of the American captain she snapped her fingers to the fiddler, after which she accompanied him to the porch.

"And when will you be back, Bryan?" For of course 'twill be a small matter for you to slip the cutter and away as you've done a score o' times before. When will you be back?"

"I'll be back for a dance this night week. And, mind you, keep one for me, Bess."

"Ay, boy, and more than one," and they kissed and parted.

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So he decided to head northward, to hug the coast until such time as it might be safe to swing out into the broad gulf, and so on southerly to the Magdalen. This he the more readily decided to do because on the north coast were loopholes of escape—little harbors of refuge wherein a bold man might slip to and hide from troublesome cutters that could steam against the wind.

"And speaking of Bay of St. John's, Wallace—Bryan was addressing the cleverest of his crew—"A good hundred miles it is, but suppose now we could make it?"

"You make it and I'll find a hiding place where a whole navy of bloodhounds wouldn't smell us, captain."

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And while they heaved on the hal-yards and gigs he sang defiantly:

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From the fog we raised a cutter of his Kinglet's o'er the way.

She fired a shot across our bows by way of sayin' Belay!

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Southeast by east for Matakam, and oh, the wind it blew!

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The sea was such, the wind was such, he didn't fire a shot.

Because they didn't dare to wear, but—

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"Oh, flyin' down the coast like—

another heave or two on the main'l, fellows."

He trained the glasses on the fast looming steamer astern. "I told 'em I'd wreck the jack before I'd let any Government vessel get her, and I will. Damn 'em anyway, I will."

"Wrecked? Then it'll be mixed drinks, skipper."

Bryan grinned. "It cert'ly will. And high priced—there's stuff below cost \$10 a quart."

"H-m-m—" Wallace was drawing the end of his tongue across his lower lip. "I've been thinking, skipper, that we'd all be better men if we had a sup of that same. A shame, don't you think yourself, skipper—so much of it down below, and we like to lose it all soon and never a sup on so cold a mornin'?"

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"And yet a grand boat of her tonnage, skipper—quick to handle."

"I know that, and a good thing for where I think I'll put her—Hell's Harbor, do they still call it, just ahead? That was the name when I was last here, five years ago."

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